

# THE MELFORD RURAL DISTRICT

IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF WEST SUFFOLK.

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1925.

(Pursuant to the Regulations of the Local Government Board.)

### 1.

Population, 12330.      Area, 49850 acres.      Number of Inhabited Houses, 3339.  
 Number of Families, 3410.      Assessable Value, £47,432.  
 Sum represented by a penny rate, £197 12s. 8d.

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The occupation of the majority of the inhabitants is agricultural, and this occupation, though poorly paid, is on the whole a healthy one.

### 2.—Extract of Vital Statistics of the year.

**BIRTHS.** { Legitimate, 173 } 181.      Birth Rate, R.G., 14.59.      England and Wales, 18.3.  
                  { Illegitimate, 8 }

**DEATHS.** 133.      Death Rate, R.G., 10.7.      England and Wales, 12.2.

Number of women dying in consequence of child-birth { from sepsis ... 0  
    { other causes ... 1

Deaths of Infants under one year per 1,000 births:—

Legitimate, 71.8.      Illegitimate, 0.      Total, 71.8.  
    Total for England and Wales, 75.

Deaths from Measles (all ages) ... .. 0  
       "      " Whooping Cough (all ages) ... 0  
       "      " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)... 0

### POOR LAW RELIEF.

The figures of this are not in my possession and are not available. Hospital and other forms of gratuitous medical relief are extensively utilized.

St. Leonard's Hospital, Sudbury, Suffolk, 18 beds, admitted 83 patients from the Melford Rural District in 1925. Average stay in hospital 24.06 days = 1997 days.

### Causes of Sickness.

The year has undoubtedly been an unusually healthy one on the whole. Except for an epidemic of Influenza in the early months of the year there have been no causes of sickness calling for mention.

This epidemic of Influenza was very widespread, and the number of persons affected was very great, but the type was mild and the complications few.

### Health Services in the Area.

(a) HOSPITALS PROVIDED OR SUBSIDISED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY OR BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL.

- (1) *Tuberculosis.* The Bury St. Edmund's Sanatorium admits cases from the area, and is provided by the County Council. The number of beds is inadequate, especially those for female patients.
- (2) *Maternity Hospitals.* }
- (3) *Children's Hospitals.* } There are none available for the area.
- (4) *Fever Hospital.* There is no fever hospital in the area. Cases are sometimes sent to Colchester Fever Hospital by the courtesy of the Medical Officer of Health to Colchester.
- (5) *Small Pox Hospital.* There is none available for the area.  
 There is no institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate children or homeless children.

(b) **AMBULANCE FACILITIES.**

- (1) For infectious cases none available. When cases are sent to Colchester the ambulance belonging to that borough is kindly lent for the purpose.
- (2) For non-infectious cases. A motor ambulance is maintained by the British Red Cross Society at Bury St. Edmund's. This can be hired, and the charge is sometimes reduced for necessitous cases.

(c) **CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.**

There is a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre held in Sudbury, which draws from part of the Area. There is another in Bures serving that district, and one in Assington. These Centres are purely consultative.

The School Clinics are under the control of the County Council, as is the treatment of Tuberculosis and Venereal Diseases.

(d) **PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.**

Medical Officer of Health—part time. (Half salary paid by County Council.)

Sanitary Inspector—one—whole time. Diploma of Royal Sanitary Institute. Diploma of Sanitary Inspectors' Association.

(e) **NURSING IN THE HOME.**

The following parishes have District Nurses, who are also Midwives:—Acton, Alpheton, Bridge Street, Assington, Boxted, Bures St. Mary, Cavendish, Great Cornard, Little Cornard, Great Waldingfield, Little Waldingfield, Hartest, Melford, Nayland-c.-Wiston, Newton (serving Leavenheath), Stoke-by-Nayland, Somerton and Stanstead. The following have Midwives only:—Chilton (the Midwife in Sudbury serves part of this district) and Lawshall.

The following parishes have no District Nurses or Midwives:—Hawkedon and Shimpling.

There is no arrangement for nursing infectious cases.

All these Nursing Associations receive a grant from the County Council, but are not subsidised by the Local Authority.

(f) **LEGISLATION IN FORCE IN AREA. ADOPTIVE ACTS.**

- (1) Public Health Amendment Act, 1890. Date of adoption, 1903.

Part 1-3. Sections 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26. Sub-sections 2, 28, 32, 33, 47, 48, 49.

- (2) Infectious Disease Prevention Act, 1890. Adopted Jan. 27, 1903.

Sections 8, 10, 13, 14, 15.

There are no Local Acts or Special Local Orders in force in this area.

### **Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.**

#### **WATER.**

This being a Rural area, water is obtained from wells scattered all over the area. Samples are taken from any well where there is reason to suspect contamination, and a chemical analysis made by the Medical Officer, and samples are occasionally sent for Bacteriological examination.

Thirty-three samples were examined in all.

Nayland is the only village which has a piped supply, and this is a continuous supply.

#### **RIVERS AND STREAMS.**

A certain amount of untreated sewerage passes into the streams from villages on the banks, but this is small in quantity and is entirely sink waste, and the amount of pollution is small.

#### **DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.**

There are no Sewerage Disposal Works in the area.

#### **CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.**

Some privy closets remain in the area, but in all closely-built areas earth closets are used.

There are only water closets in large houses, and these are entirely under private control.

A scheme for the emptying of pail closets is in good working order in Melford and Bures. These are emptied once a week, 500 in Melford and 200 in Bures.

#### **SCAVENGING.**

A scheme is in good working order in Melford and Bures.

### **Sanitary Inspection of Area.**

This is as well done as it is possible for one Inspector to do in such a large scattered area.



# WORK OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR.

	Acton.	Alpheton.	Assington.	Boxted.	Bures St. Mary.	St. Bartholomew.	Cavendish.	Chilton.	Gt. Cornard.	Lt. Cornard.	Hartest.	Hawkedon.	Lawshall.	Leavenheath.	Melford.	Nayland with Wissington.	Newton.	Shimpling.	Somerton.	Stoke-by-Nayland.	Stanstead.	Gt. Waldingfield.	Lt. Waldingfield.	TOTAL.
Complaints received ... ..	1	1	2	-	6	-	4	1	7	4	2	1	3	-	19	6	2	1	1	5	3	3	1	73
Nuisances detected ... ..	5	1	5	1	12	-	14	4	15	7	10	3	14	3	41	15	7	6	3	10	4	8	4	192
Nuisances abated by Statutory Notice served ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Nuisances abated without notices served ... ..	5	1	5	1	12	-	12	4	15	7	10	3	14	3	41	14	7	6	3	10	4	8	4	189
Nuisances being dealt with ... ..	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Offensive accumulations removed ... ..	3	2	4	1	8	-	6	1	9	3	2	1	4	1	19	5	2	2	1	4	1	2	1	82
Houses newly erected ... ..	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	13
Houses in course of erection ... ..	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Houses disinfected ... ..	2	-	-	1	7	-	3	3	2	3	1	-	1	2	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	34
Filthy houses cleansed ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Houses overcrowded (abated) ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Schools inspected ... ..	1	1	1	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	20
Schools disinfected ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Wells (new) ... ..	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Wells (cleaned out, deepened, etc.) ... ..	1	-	1	-	3	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	15
Samples of water taken for analysis ... ..	2	-	1	-	3	-	2	3	6	1	1	-	-	-	6	3	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	33
Privies (new) ... ..	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	16
Privies (repaired) ... ..	1	1	2	1	4	-	3	-	3	1	-	1	-	1	8	4	1	-	2	2	1	2	1	39
Privies (converted into pail closets) ... ..	-	-	-	-	4	-	3	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Sewers (repaired, relaid, etc.) ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Ditches cleansed ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Sink pipes disconnected ... ..	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Drains (new) ... ..	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Drains (improved) ... ..	1	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	4	1	1	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	19
Drains tested with water ... ..	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Slaughter Houses inspected ... ..	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	4	4	1	1	-	2	-	1	1	21
Dairies and Cowsheds inspected ... ..	4	1	2	1	4	1	2	2	1	1	2	-	-	1	9	3	2	2	-	2	4	2	2	48
Dairies and Cowsheds repaired, etc. ....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Animals improperly kept, removed ... ..	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Bakehouses inspected ... ..	-	-	1	-	1	-	4	-	2	-	2	-	-	1	8	3	-	1	-	2	1	-	1	27
Workshops inspected ... ..	2	1	1	-	3	-	6	-	2	-	3	-	-	-	12	3	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	39
Outworkers visited ... ..	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	25	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	55
Outworkers' lists received ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total number of inspections and visits made ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2360
Letters sent out ... ..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	426
House-to-house inspection ... ..	10	-	15	-	25	-	20	10	50	15	10	40	25	-	100	20	10	-	-	15	10	25	20	420

GEO. F. RAMPLING, M.S.I.A., &c., Sanitary Inspector.

## SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action taken.

## OCCUPATIONS CONTROLLED BY REGULATIONS.

There are two gut factories, one in Great Cornard and one in Little Cornard.

These are inspected monthly and are found in good order.

## SCHOOLS.

### (1) SANITARY CONDITION.

The sanitary condition of the twenty schools in the area is fair. Most are supplied with pail closets, and cesspits remaining are being dealt with.

### (2) WATER SUPPLY.

The water to two schools in the area was found unsuitable and the wells closed. In order that the school children should have an adequate supply of pure drinking water, there has been placed in the school a covered container with tap, and these are kept filled from a wholesome supply near by.

## Housing.

### (a) GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS.

- (1) The general housing conditions are fair in all parishes, but the standard is a low one.
- (2) There is no marked shortage of houses in any parish at the present time.
- (3) No important changes of population has taken place or is expected.

(b) OVERCROWDING.

- (1) Extent. There is no great amount of overcrowding in the area.
- (2) Causes. What there is is mainly due to the tendency of the adult members of the family to remain in their parents' house.
- (3) There has only been one case of marked overcrowding, and in this case the family had to be removed to the Union.

(c) FITNESS OF HOUSES.

1. (a) General standard of Housing is fair, but similar to most rural areas the standard is not a high one.
- (b) The usual defects found are dampness due to bad guttering, and to the fact that many houses have brick floors below the level of the ground, and general structural defects due to the age of the buildings and the fact that many are lath and plaster structures.
- (c) Defects are mostly due to the want of supervision by owners.
2. General action taken as regards unfit houses.

### Housing Statistics for the Year 1925.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	...	...	...	...	...	11
(b) With State assistance under Housing Acts 1919 or 1923 :						
(i.) By the Local Authority	...	...	...	...	...	0
(ii.) By other bodies or persons	...	...	...	...	...	11

### Unfit Houses.

#### I. INSPECTION.

(1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	...	...	1360
(2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	...	...	...	...	...	420
(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	2
(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to above) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	26

#### II REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Local Authority or their officers	...	...	...	...	...	26
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#### III. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

##### A. Proceedings under Section 3 of Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	...	...	...	...	0
(2) Number of houses which were rendered fit :						
(a) by Owners	...	...	...	...	...	0
(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...	...	...	...	0
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by Owners of intention to close	...	...	...	...	...	0

##### B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	...	...	...	0
(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied :						
(a) by Owners	...	...	...	...	...	0
(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...	...	...	...	0

##### C. Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to the making of a closing order	...	...	...	...	...	2
(2) Number of closing orders made	...	...	...	...	...	2
(3) Number of dwelling houses in regard to which closing orders were determined, on the houses being made fit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	2
(4) Demolition orders made	...	...	...	...	...	0
(5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders	...	...	...	...	...	0



#### DIFFICULTIES FOUND IN REMEDYING UNFITNESS.

These are all due to the low rents as compared with the cost of repairs. Many repairs done have cost 20 years' rent.

#### D. UNHEALTHY AREAS.

There are none in the district.

#### E. BYE-LAWS RELATING TO HOUSES, TO HOUSES LET IN LODGINGS, AND TO TENTS, VANS, SHEDS, &c.

There are none in force in the district.

### Inspection and Supervision of Food.

#### MILK.

The milk produced within the area is wholesome. The amount of infantile diarrhœa is small, but there is room for improvement in the cleanliness of the milkers in some cases.

All cowsheds and dairies are registered either as Wholesale Producers or Retail Purveyors. There are 18 of the former and 45 of the latter on the register.

(1) Control of tuberculous cattle is in the hands of the County Council.

(2) No action has been taken under the Milk (Special Designations) Order, 1923.

#### MEAT.

##### (1) MEAT INSPECTION.

All slaughter houses are visited weekly at the time of slaughter. No arrangement is made for marking. Condemned meat is destroyed by removal to destructor.

Carcasses condemned :—Oxen 5, Pigs 9, Sheep 1.

There is no Public Slaughter House.

##### (2) NUMBER OF PRIVATE SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

	In 1920.	In Jan., 1925.	In Dec., 1925.
Registered .....	20	20	20
Licensed .....	—	—	—
Total.....	20	20	20

#### BREAD.

Sanitary condition of bake-houses is fair. There are no underground bake-houses.

### Infectious Diseases.

#### A. SCARLET FEVER.

The number of cases of this disease during the five years, 1921 to 1925, was as follows :—

1921...34      1922...23      1923...5      1924...3      1925...9

The cause of the spread of this disease in the heavy years 1921 and 1922 was in each case the mildness of the disease in the first cases, so that children attending school had the disease and were not seen by a medical man, and continued attendance whilst infective. Upon the first case being seen by a doctor notification was received, and when these mild cases were discovered and isolated the spread ceased. On one occasion 9 children suffering from Scarlet Fever were found still attending school.

Another epidemic was started by one child, who was infected by a visitor, attending school throughout the first 3 weeks of the disease. The disease appears to be characterised by its extreme mildness.

There was only one "return case." No use has been made of the Dick Test.

#### B. DIPHTHERIA.

1921...5      1922...0      1923...10      1924...2      1925...2

The cases in 1923 were due to a case of Nasal Diphtheria being introduced into a house containing a large number of children, and remaining unrecognised until a severe case of faucial diphtheria arose and drew attention to the trouble.

With this exception the cases were scattered, and the source of infection in each case could not be traced.

Diphtheria antitoxin is held by the Medical Officer of Health, and is supplied upon request and is promptly used.

No use has been made of the Schick test or of artificial methods of immunisation.

(c) Diseases notifiable under the regulations of 7th January, 1919 : Pneumonia, Malaria, Dysentery, Trench Fever have been notified in very small numbers and call for no comment.

(d) The examination of clinical material, such as sputum and throat swabs, is carried out under arrangements made by the County Council.

- (e) There are no arrangements for the isolation of contact cases. They are merely kept under observation in their own homes.
- (f) No vaccinations were done under the Public Health (Small-pox Prevention) Regulations, 1917, all cases calling for vaccination under these regulations being done by their own medical man.

C. NON-NOTIFIABLE ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

These diseases are promptly notified by the School Masters. In 1920 Measles and Whooping Cough were prevalent all over the district. Both were mild in character.

In 1923 a severe epidemic of Whooping Cough occurred in Melford and Great Waldingfield, and in 1924 Measles was again prevalent all over the district.

In 1925 Measles and Chicken Pox caused the closure of school in Cornard and Assington, but these were of a mild type. Influenza was very prevalent during the early part of the year. This was perhaps a more extensive epidemic as regards the number affected than the severe epidemic of 1917-18, but the type was mild and the duration of the attacks was short and the complications few. When notifications from schools are received some of the cases are visited and the diagnosis verified and advice given to the Masters.

Schools are closed when necessary, but this is done by the School Medical Officer.

INFLUENZA. There has been an epidemic of this disease each year of varying severity. The deaths from this disease have been :—1921, one; 1922, six; 1923, none; 1924, three; 1925, four.

There have been no cases of Anthrax or Rabies in the period under review.

CANCER. The mortality of this disease during the last five years is as follows :

1921 ... 21; 1922 ... 21; 1923 ... 21; 1924 ... 19; 1925 ... 12.

These figures might, with interest, be compared with those for Tuberculosis :

1921 ... 25; 1922 ... 17; 1923 ... 16; 1924 ... 10; 1925 ... 8.

In this area an endeavour has been made to emphasise the need of seeking treatment early, but without any marked result. It might be well if another effort in this direction were made.

It has been the practice in this area to carry out a thorough disinfection after deaths from cancer.

DISINFECTION.

This is done after all cases of notifiable infectious diseases and after cancer.

It is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector; a formalin spray and formalin vapour being used.

DISINFESTATION.

This is done in the Sudbury Union by arrangement with the Guardians.

3.—Notifiable Diseases during year 1925.

Disease.					Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Small Pox	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	9	5	...
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	2	1	...
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)	...	...	...	...	1	0	...
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	..
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	2	...	...

There was one death from Scarlet Fever, but this was notified and died outside the district.

AGE INCIDENCE OF THE NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

CASES.		Under one year.	1 —	2 —	3 —	4 —	5 —	10 —	15 —	20 —	35 —	45 —	65 & over.
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	2	2	3	...	1	...	1	...	...
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	..	...
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	..	...	...	1	1

The Scarlet Fever cases were scattered and the cause of infection could not be traced.  
The Ophthalmia Neonatorum case recovered without loss of vision.  
The Scarlet Fever cases were—3 in one village (source not found), 2 in another, 3 in another, and 1 at a different period of the year. No trace could be found of the origin of these cases.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods.				New Cases.				Deaths.			
				Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
				M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under one year ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...
1—	...	...	..	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5—	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...
10—	...	...	..	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
15—	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
20—	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...
25—	...	...	...	2	5	...	...	...	4	...	...
35—	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
45—	...	...	..	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
55—	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
65 and over	...	..	..	1	...	...	..	...	...	...	...
Total ...				6	9	1	4	4	4	—	—
				15		5		8		0	

Tuberculosis is notified promptly. There were no non-notified Tuberculous deaths.

PUBLIC HEALTH (Prevention of Tuberculosis) REGULATIONS, 1925.

No action necessary under these regulations.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1925 (Section 62).

No action taken.

R. W. RIX, M.O.H.

